BERSABA:
OR, THE
Love of David.
A
POEM.

Written by *Samuel Cobb*, Student of Trinity Colledge, *Cambridge*.

Improbe Amor! quid non mortalia pectora cogis?
Virg. Æn. l. 4.

LONDON,
Printed and are to be Sold by *J. Whitlock* near *Stationers-Hall*, 1695.

THE PREFACE.

IT may look like Presumption, perhaps, to appear again in publick, after such ill success, such a fearful Engagement, and such dangerous Enemies, who resolve to draw upon an Author, whatever he be, and fly at him open-mouthed, like a Pack of Irish Wolves barking at the Moon; who think that Man happiest that strikes deepest; who, because they have no Wit themselves, will not allow any in others. This, one would think, were enough to deterr a young Scribler, from ever after engaging himself in a Poetical Quarrel. But our Authors for the most the part, hav Hydra's Heads, cut one off, another presently rises in the roon of it; these, like Benito in the Play, tho' kick'd and cuff'd, ar resolv'd to scrape on, and suffer heroically. They are not now-d ays arm'd formidine fustis; when they are once in the humour writing, their Natures are invincible, and can no more be expell than the English can leave Fighting after the first Engagement, than an unlucky Gamester can forbear Playing, when he has lost round sum of Money. Since then this wicked Custom has gain so much strength upon the World; since Fools and Blockheads, like Logs, will Swim uppermost; since every paltry Apprentice that has read a few Plays, sets up for an Author; since these, I say, take the Priviledge of writing, I am resolv'd not to stand out, but make one for Company's sake; if I am laugh'd at, it will be a comfort to have Companions; for tho' some good natur'd Persons (I can't tell what to call them) have snapp'd at me once already, yet I cannot give over for my Life, I must on: Ecce iterum Crispinus, I am come once more to furnish matter for their senseless Lampoons:

make bold to use the Impudence of a Player, who will appear upon the Stage, though hist first off an hundred times. But I must beg the Favour of them not to debarr me the liberty of Prefacing, for that is the Colours which our Company is known by; and 'tis as great a rarity now-a-days to see a Poet without a Preface, as a Spaniard without his Cloak and Sword: With this he covers his Faults, and defends them at the same time.

Here I must digress a little from my purpose (for it is grown a modern Vice to amuse the Reader with Chriticisms upon the Ancients, and tell him strange things, nothing to the Subject that lies before him: And when one has made a few Poems, to write in the Preface how far we've out-gone the French *and* Italian *in advancing Tragedies and Comedies:) I must humour the Age, and use these digressions for Custom's sake; but more particularly by reason of a late Ode of mine upon the* Queen's *death, which came out under the name of* J. D. Gent. *which made such a Noise abroad, and which an ingenious Gentleman bestow'd a few Reflections upon: I am not in the least asham'd of what he says, but slight him more than the Mastiff did a little barking Cur, when he shew'd him his Teeth, and pist upon him. However I think my self oblig'd in a manner by the Laws of Nature to say something to it; for there is no Man so inhumane who will not speak in defence of his own Off-spring, when he finds it abus'd.*

Had I been the first that try'd the severity of ignorant and envious Men, I might with all justice imaginable have murmur'd at my misfortune; but since others, and those of extraordinary note, have run through the same hazards, the same critical persecutions, I willingly submit my self, like a poetical Martyr, to their tyrannick Fury, but with the constancy of an unjust Sufferer can laugh at their vain, insignificant, and harmless Blows. There are three things, I confess, which are to be utterly banish'd our Commonwealth (for I will pretend to be a small Member of it) Blasphemy, Prophaneness, and Obscenity. Wherever any of these meet in a Poem, we may call the sense Discas'd, it can in no manner be Wit, however cleanly it be cover'd. For Obscenity

Ovid

vid was banish'd Rome, *as appears by his own account in his* ond Book de Triſtibus : *His Elegies are ſomewhat Laſcivious;* w is his *Imperial Poem free from thoſe extravagant ſtories of* aſiphae *and* Myrrha; *where the Subjects are ſo unaptly choſen, hat they would not allow him to write chaſtly.* Horace, *whom we have n ſo great eſteem, is licentious in this kind to an extremity, hiefly in his Satyrs, which he wrote not with an intention to ash Vice (as* Juvenal *did) but purpoſely to pleaſe himſelf.* Horace *we find leading his Women to Bed, but he ſays no more of hem.* Virgil, *the beſt of all the others, wrote Love-paſſions with dmirable Softneſs and Purity; conſidering that Poets are commonly too Luxuriant on thoſe occaſions. I need not name* Cornelius Gallus, *and many others: I will only deſcend to our Times:* Mr. Cowley *has ſome ſmall taſte of it in his Miſtreſs, which he ſeems to be ſenſible of in his Preface. Much exceſs is to be allow'd in Love, and even more in Poetry, ſo we avoid thoſe two unpardonable Vices, Prophaneneſs and Obſcenity, which (ſays he) if I am Guilty of, they have ill repreſented my thoughts and intentions. Prophaneneſs and Blaſphemy commonly go together, and the Author of the Satyrs againſt the* Jeſuits *ſeems to me, to be Guilty of all thoſe three Vices: I don't mean to detract from the honour of the dead; but, as the moſt vulgar Perſons are allow'd to give their Vote, ſo I only ſpeak my opinion, which, I am perſuaded in this caſe no body will go about to contradict. As for Blaſphemy, of which I was accus'd, I cannot but allow with* Mr. Dryden, *that the uſing of it is a kind of applying Pidgeons to the Soles of the Feet, it proclaims their Fancy as well as Judgment to be in a deſperate condition. This I ſay, becauſe I have found the ſame immoderate liberty of Verſe in others, as well as my ſelf; and if the Supercilious Readers had examined them with the like ſtrictneſs and impartiality, I am ſure very few of them would have eſcap'd the fire. I do not mean to tread in their ſteps; for the* Ode *was ſnatch'd from me ſo abruptly and unfortunately, that I could not gather time enough to conſider what I had wrote. I found* J. D. Gent. *join'd to it, of which I*

was wholly ignorant; for I scorn to do that injustice to another, in cloaking my Faults under his name; and on the other side I am so vain, that I would not let any one claim my Excellencies, (if I had any) but my self.

Nevertheless those Men (who pretend to understand much) would certainly have been more mild and favourble, had they but consider'd the Licentiousness of Pindarique Poetry, *which is a more exalted sort of Lyrick, to which we are to allow more Digressions, more bold Metaphors and Allegories, than to any other Verse besides; which as few can understand, so few can write it well: Hear what* Pindar *speaks himself concerning it (for (as the* Plain Dealer *says) Authors love to shew in the Preface that they understand* Greek *and* Latin, *for fear the Reader should not find it out by the Poem.)*

Πολλὰ μοι ὤκεα βέλη, Ἔνδον ἔντι φαρέτρας φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν, ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν, ἑρμηνέων χατίζει: *He writes to the Learned and Wise, and not to the Vulgar, who commonly correct what they cannot comprehend, therefore he compares them to Crows, (shadowing by that name,* Bacchilides, (Schmidius *says,) who was one of the same Wit and Learning as our pretended Criticks are)* ἄκραντα γαρύετον Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον. *But lest I should be guilty of Pindarical Digression, I will return to the Argument that lies before me, though, I hope, I may stand excusable for what I've said, it being the Zeal of a Parent to it's Children.*

Dorotheus, *Bishop of* Tyrus, *(who lived in the Year* 401,) *and* Epiphanius, *relate the Story of* David *and* Bathsheba *after this manner; They tell us that* Nathan *(who lived in* Gabaon *a City near* Rama) *foresaw that* David *would Sin with* Beersabea, *(for so they call her,) and as he was coming to forewarn* David, Belial *laid a dead Corps in the way: Now it was counted a great part of Charity amongst the* Jews *to bury the Dead, as appears by the Book of* Tobit: Nathan *therefore fearing lest the Body should be unreverently torn by wild Beasts, buried it; in the mean time* David *lay with* Bathsheba; Nathan *two or three days after was sent to warn him of it. Whether it be true, or no,*

I

I will not dispute now, but it seems impoetical: Therefore Theodorus Beza *has rejected it; and though I took the hint of my Fancy from him, yet, I think, I may with as great Justice claim the whole* Poem *to be my own, as a Poet does a Play when he has taken the Plot from a Novel, or with more dexterity changes the Scene, by turning the* French *and* Italian *Comedies into* English, *and throws them upon the Stage for his own peculiar Wit and Invention. I have not followed my Author word for word, neither have I Paraphras'd him in his Sense, but have taken out what was too grave for Poetry, and have added some Fancies of my own; as at the latter end, where the Angel appears to* Nathan *in the shape of* Samuel; *and where* Nathan *tells the King a short story of* Solomon *and* Christ. *This way of Writing we took from* Virgil; *but, if I am not mistaken, we have improv'd the Thought. For some Learned Men think that* Virgil *is in a Fault, when he brings in* Anchises *relating to* Æneas *the Chronicle of those that were yet unborn, who should proceed from his Son. They wonder how he should come to the knowledge of Futurity. They must either allow that he was a Prophet, when he was alive, and then it will be probable; for the Ancients thought that Men do the same things below, as they did above. See* Horace, *who makes mention of* Sappho *and* Alcæus, *as if they were the same Poets in Hell, as they were on Earth.*

Æoliis fidibus querentem
Sappho Puellis de popularibus, *&c.* *Od.* 13. *l.* 2.

If this cannot be prov'd of Anchises, *we must run to* Pythagoras *his* Transmigration, *and* Plato's Phædo, *who thought that the Souls of Men inform'd several Bodies, and went out of one into another: Then it will be no wonder if* Anchises *tells his Son what Persons shall come after, since their Souls were predestinated for them below. But we never follow this. Mr.* Dryden *is more exact in the Conquest of* Granada, *where, in the Second Part, he brings in the Ghost of* Almansor's *Mother, warning*

 him

83

in of his future Love; yet she knew not this at her being a Ghost, but an Angel bids her go and forewarn her Son, who wander'd about ignorant, of his Parentage.

Then from the Battlements of Heav'ns high Tower
A Watchman Angel bid me wait this Hour;
And told me that I had a Task assign'd,
To warn the little Pledge I left behind.

Spenser, *who first led us the way in* English, *supposes* Merlin *to tell* Britomart, *his Virgin-Hero, the Progeny of the Kings and Princes which should spring from her and* Arthegal. Milton *follows his footsteps; but he could not bring in a Prophet since there were but two Persons upon Earth; therefore an Angel appears to* Adam, *and comforts him with the Promis'd Seed.* Cowley *makes* David *dream of his Race, and an Angel confirm the truth of it, when he awakes. Though Dreams were held of old a kind of Prophesy, though God was sometimes pleas'd to reveal his Will in that manner, and foreshew the Fates of Kingdoms, the various Changes of Empires, and things to come, as is manifested from* Pharaoh, Joseph, *and* Daniel; *yet it would not have been according to the Rules of Poetry, to have made* David *dream of all his Successors, and his Race for a thousand Years together, had not some Diviner Being order'd the Vision wisely, and appear'd afterward to persuade him in the certainty of it; for in those days the* Jews *began to disbelieve the Sacredness of Dreams, thinking them to proceed from the multitude of Business:* David *himself thought so at first,*

That only 'twas wild Phancy's play,
The loose and scatter'd relicks of the Day.

But the Poet shew'd his Skill by making Gabriel *satisfie him. The Reason why we commonly bring in Angels or Prophets, when Futurity is to be mention'd, is this; we are to make improbabili-*

ties

ties ſeem probable; for ſhould we tell ſuch ſtrange things in our own Perſons, without bringing a Muſe, or the like to help us off, no body would believe us, notwithſtanding our boaſted Inſpiration: For, ſays Homer, *on ſuch an occaſion,*

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι μοῦσαι, ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι·
Ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστε, πάρεστέ τε, ἴστέ τε πάντα,
Ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν, οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν. Iliad. β.

Which Virgil (Æn. 7.) *follows, by invoking the Muſes to tell him,*

Qui bello exciti reges, &c.
Vos meminiſtis enim, divæ, & memorare poteſtis,
Ad nos vix tenuis famæ perlabitur aura.

This Rule is conſtantly to be obſerv'd in an Epick Poem, whenever we have need for it. And we muſt likewiſe take notice, that if we have occaſion for Angels, Devils, Furies, to forewarn, perſwade, or counſel any one what to do, they muſt not appear in their proper ſhape, but in form of them, who are either lov'd, honour'd or reverenc'd by thoſe to whom they appear. Homer's ὄνειρος *appears to* Agamemnon *in his ſleep, dreſt in the likeneſs of* Neſtor, *the chief and wiſeſt of his Counſellors. But in his Third* Iliad *he ſeems to be inexcuſable, where he brings in* Venus *like an old Spinning Woman of* Lacedæmon, *whom* Helen *lov'd: No ſooner had this old Dame ſpoke, but* Helen *knew her to be* Venus *by her Eyes, her Neck, her Breaſt and every thing, which, in my Opinion, is a very odd kind of Change: We muſt nevertheleſs Reverence him as our Father, and give him leave* aliquando dormitare, *to ſleep a little now and then. There are ſome ſuch Changes in* Virgil *and* Statius, *which, ſeeing Mr.* Cowley *has taken nõtice of before, I will not meddle with.*

As for the Poem that lies before us, I ſuppoſe the Reader will find as ſmooth a run of Verſe, as the Subject would allow, and

very few Synalæpha's, which I endeavour'd to avoid; for what grates the Ear more than the Sounding of one Vowel upon another? There might be more ſaid concerning this, but we will reſt a little, ſince the Author of the Dedicatory Preface to Examen Poeticum has diſcourſed enough of it. Now if after all, I find but a few Friends, I ſhall, like the Spartan, ſcorn an innumerable Army of Enemies; who if they are offended at my wretched Stuff now, I can tell no way to be reveng'd of them, than (as Sir John Denham has ſaid before) by writing worſe and worſe the next time, which, I hope, will prove ſuch a Puniſhment to them, that they will not dare to take up Arms againſt an Author, for fear of being knock'd on the head with Nonſenſe and inhumane Dulneſs.

Trinity College, Cambridge,
Auguſt 3. 1695.

S. Cobb.

THE

Love of David, &c

Imitated from *Theod. Beza.*

OF Deities, that Stock bright Heav'n above,
Or reign below, there's none ſo great as Love.
Love through the gilded Firmament does fly,
Commands the Gods, and Lords it in the Sky.
Love does on Earth his beaut'ous Empires keep,
And makes his Voyage through the boundleſs Deep.
With ſweet Contagion he corrupts the Mind,
Harmfully fair, and dangerouſly kind.
As through the Nations of the World he flew,
And ſmiling Ills in ev'ry Kingdom blew:
At laſt to *Judah's* Sacred Tow'rs he came,
Judah! Immortal as its glorious Name.
There great *Jeſſides* he with Envy view'd,
Whom nor his Darts had pierc'd, nor Charms ſubdu'd.
And well he knew, that from his Loyns ſhould flow
A ſure Deſtruction to the Pow'rs below,
In whom Hell ſuffer'd harder than before,
And doubled Pains th' Infernal Tyrants bore,
Greater than thoſe, when impiouſly bold
They fell from the reſiſted Sky of old.

Remembring this, Am I, (*said he,*) whom none
Tho' thousands) could subdue, subdu'd by One?
The growing World I, like a Conqu'rour, sway'd,
Me *Adam*, Father of Mankind, obey'd.
These Darts (my only praise) did once ingage,
Fierce Men, with these I tam'd a barb'rous Age.
I drew the Deluge from the wond'ring Sea,
The Watry Battle was ingag'd by Me.
The well-built, lofty *Babylonian* Tower,
And Murder'd *Ninus* testify my Pow'r.
By Me, in flames Incestuous *Sodom* fry'd,
When Burnings hotter than her own she try'd.
By Me, to *Troy* the *Grecian* Navy sail'd,
And Perjur'd *Priam*'s Sacred Palace scal'd.
Hector untimely to the Shades did go,
Inglorious Armies follow'd him below.
With Heathen Beauty I fond *Sampson* slew,
(For Me, what will not beaut'ous Woman do?)
Isr'el's vast Champion a full Harvest reap'd,
And Piles on Piles, Trophies on Trophies heap'd.
For many Miles torn Heroes choak'd the Way,
Like Hills on Hills dismembred *Gathites* lay.
Him I subdu'd; nor stop'd I there, till He
Bent at my Virtue, and was blind like Me.
Nor shall you scape, *Jessides*; tho' you shine
In *Judah*'s Palace, all the World is mine.
Arrows and Darts instead of Stones I'll throw,
Command thy *Sling*, and I'll command my *Bow*.

Thus spoke the God. At this inrag'd he grew,
And from the Top of *Judah*'s Temple flew.
A Golden Bow he on his Shoulders wore,
A Quiver full of pointed Deaths he bore.

Then ſpreading round his Eye, unſeen, at laſt
He view'd the fair *Berſaba*, as he paſt.
Tho' Sacred *Judah*'s Beauties were Divine,
The fair *Berſaba*, like the Moon, did ſhine
Among th' inferiour Stars: So beauteous ſhe;
But, ripe for Man, now might a Mother be.
Ev'n Love himſelf admir'd her won'drous ſhape,
And ſhe might well fear an Immortal Rape.
With Gods and Goddeſſes ſhe might compare,
For Gods and Goddeſſes were not ſo fair,
No ſpot, no blemiſh in her Face was ſeen,
Clear as the Morn, and as the Sky, Serene.
So bright, ſo goodly her Complexion ſhone,
As if ſome Angel drew it by his own.
And in her Eyes did thouſand Graces play,
Like ſparkling Stars that gild the Milky Way.
Here pointed Flames with cheerful Light did ſtrive,
Able to Murder Mortals and revive.
But ah! What Pencil can deſcribe, or ſhow
The radiant Honours of her ſpacious Brow?
Here on her Neck in Curls ſoft Treſſes rol'd,
Her Neck, like Iv'ry, and her Hair, like Gold.
Smooth, but more warm than Ice, her Breaſts did ſhow,
Whiter than Marble, but more ſoft than Snow.
The God admir'd the Virtues of her Face,
Beauty contending with Majeſtick Grace.
I'll caſt, *ſaid he*, my uſeleſs Bow away,
There will I ſit, there I delight to play.
My Arms no more ſhall wound unguarded Hearts,
Far hence my Quiver and my idle Darts.
Under the ſhadow of her bending Brow
I'll place my ſelf, and uſe it for my Bow,
Whilſt ev'ry glance proceeding from her Eye,
My want of pointed Arrows ſhall ſupply.

Thence will I ſhoot, ſome Martial Hero tame,
I'll uſe my Skill, and they ſhall uſe their Flame.

He ſpake; and cloth'd himſelf with ſubtle Air,
No Bow, no Darts, no Quiver did he bear.
To bright *Berſaba* bodied thus he flies,
And ſhoots himſelf by ſtealth into her Eyes.
The bright *Berſaba* felt him as he came,
Her rolling Eyes dart forth an am'rous flame.
Her Heart ſtraight bluſhes with a ſecret Fire,
Her wanton Breaſt glows with a new Deſire.
She tries all Arts that Woman's Wit can find,
And only Love fills now her lab'ring mind.
Sometimes her Curls on her ſoft Forehead play,
And here and there in various rollings ſtray.
Sometimes ſhe ſeems her riſing Breaſts to chide,
And all the Riches of her Boſom hide.
Sometimes her Neck ſhe openly diſplays,
And a fair Goddeſs by her Form betrays.
But in her Garden when to bath ſhe goes,
And all around her naked Beauty ſhows,
Undreſt ſo lovely, and ſo beauteous ſhe,
Looks like a *Venus* riſing from the Sea.

There ſtood a Tow'r, where Kings did oft repair,
To ſlacken and unbend Imperial Care.
From whence *Jeſſides* ſaw *Berſaba*'s Charms,
Jeſſides, fam'd for Valour and for Arms.
Oft, like ſome God-like Hero, would he fight,
And his own Conqueſts in high Verſes write.
Scarce could one know in which he did excell,
So bravely would he Fight, and Sing ſo well.
But Love impartial and as bold as Fate,
Love always dangerous to the Good and Great.

With

With ſubtle ſtrength Heroick Souls does pierce,
No Brazen Caſtles can reſiſt his force.
Jeſſides ſaw, (caught in an am'rous Chain,)
The naked Beauty: (could the Gods refrain?)
Through ev'ry part his rolling Eye-balls rove,
And pry into the Labyrinths of Love.
His Looks the Paſſion of his Heart betray,
The Royal Lover melts inſenſibly away:
At laſt o'erwhelm'd with a vaſt tide of flame,
Which from her Eyes, like darted Lightning, came.
So when we gaze on the Sun's glorious Light,
Our Eyes ſtreight faint and ſicken at the ſight.
Now *David* yields, he lays his Scepter down,
Forgets himſelf, and does his God diſown.
His Songs now heathen and rebellious prove,
No more he vies with Seraphims above;
No more of Wonders and of Heav'n he ſings,
Love tunes his Heart, to Love he tunes his Strings:
He Courts with Paſſion; (what can Woman do
When Kings turn Lovers, and when Monarchs ſue?)
Within his Breaſt he feeds immodeſt fires,
Till the kind She conſents to his deſires;
She thinks it brave t'enjoy an am'rous King,
And the Great Author licenſes the Sin.

But now her teeming Womb to ſwell began,
And God's bright Image lengthens into Man.
When *Judah*'s Monarch fears impartial Fame,
For tho' he loves the Crime, he hates the Name.
Remark'd Adult'ry ſeems an odious thing,
And Whoredom's more apparent in a King.

Now *Iſrael*'s Sons, whom *Ammon* had oppos'd,
Laid Siege on *Rabbah*, and her Walls enclos'd;

Where

Where Just *Urias*, for his Valour known,
Fought for his Country's Honour, and his own;
Defended *Judah*'s Right, and *Judah*'s Lord,
And wrote his Monarch's Title with his Sword;
Abroad he roam'd; him Camps and Arms did please,
Whilst *David* wanton'd in domstick ease.
But now he's sent for, and must haste away,
Leave all his Armies, and his Warlike play:
He comes; and *David* with a feign'd embrace,
A seeming Kindness, and dissembled Face,
Salutes the General, and to know desires
Much of his Troops, of *Joab* much inquires.
Th' unhappy innocent Man begins to show
Th' Events of War, th' Advantage of the Foe.
Tells what their Forces, what their Numbers were,
The Deaths of all; nor thought his own so near.
At the King's Table royally he Dines,
And drinks of Noble *Arnon*'s costly Wines:
But *David*, fearing that all *Isr'el* knew
Those Crimes, which he alone was privy to,
Resolves the Good, the Right'ous, and the Just,
Shall fall a Victim to his royal Lust;
No fear of Judgment can his Mind reclaim,
He dreams of Thunder as an idle Name.

'Twas now the time when Night's prevailing shade,
And grateful Darkness did the World invade;
All Nature sleeps; Birds to their Nests repair,
Nor longer *Murmur* through the dusky Air.
Beasts lie extended on their hollow Beds,
And drowsy Cedars nod their leafy Heads.
Ev'n Storms are silent, and loud Tempests sleep,
Whales slumber in the Chambers of the Deep.

Yet

Yet wakeful *David* can enjoy no reſt,
Whilſt various Thoughts diſturb his anxious Breaſt.
All Night his Mind's imploy'd the Juſt to kill,
Who fear'd no danger, for he knew no ill.
At laſt th' Inhumane bloody King deſigns
His Fall, and writes his Death in fatal Lines.

Soon as the Morning did her Beams diſplay,
And bluſhing, gave the Signals of the Day:
With joyful haſte the brave *Urias* went,
Bearing his Sentence to great *Joab*'s Tent;
He goes, but ſtreight lies mingled with the ſlain
Of val'ant Thouſands ſtretch'd upon the Plain;
The cloud of Death o'ercaſts his glimm'ring Eyes,
His bleeding Ghoſt ſinks downward to the Skies.

This did the Father of the Gods behold,
And (far as an Immortal Being could)
Did bluſh. Red Thunder in his Hand he bore,
The Thunder too look'd redder than before;
Whilſt *David* ſcorn'd his mighty Friend above,
And barter'd *Judah* for unkingly Love,
Chaffer'd his Empire for a ſoft Embrace,
Yielding his Glories to a Female Face.
Whilſt in the Front too Juſt *Urias* ſtood,
And dy'd *Philiſtian* Arrows with his Blood,
God laid aſide his pity and his love:
Almighty Grief with doubtful Anger ſtrove.
The wide Fxpanſion trembled all around,
And diſtant Stars did horribly reſound.
The dreadful Eccho through Heav'n's Court did fly,
And frighten'd the wing'd People of the Sky.
Here trembling Angels gather'd to inquire
The grounds and cauſes of this ſudden fire;

From whence the ſtir and heav'nly Tumult roſe,
Or whom the Father for his Rage had choſe;
Whether ſome haughty, head-ſtrong Seraphs dare
To ſtorm the Sky, and cope the Thunderer:
Whether on Earth his Light'ning will be hurl'd,
And ravel the fine Clock-work of the World.
Or if th' Immortal Citizens of Heav'n
Should from their ancient, native Seats be driv'n;
For they remembred well, what God of old,
When firſt he built the mighty Globe, foretold
How Earth to Nothing ſhould at laſt retire,
And Heav'n's high Fabrick in the Flames expire.

Above the Clouds, where the Sun's golden face
N'ere looks, nor *Cynthia* caſts imperfect Rays,
There is a Place of pureſt hallow'd Light,
Painted with Stars, mark'd with Eternal White,
(Whether it comes from Souls, who knew no ſin,
Or be the Shadow of the Light within)
Which leads the way to God's ætherial Throne,
By all Heav'n's Peers and common People known.
Here reigns th' Almighty, and from hence ſurveys
The ſubject Earth, wide Lands, and ſwelling Seas;
Him, King of Men, and Father of the Gods,
Stars, Earth obey, and tremble when he Nods.
Here from each part and corner of the Sky,
With nimble Wings affrighted Cherubs fly.
When the grand Silence thus th' Almighty broke,
And, ſhaking his Immortal Head, he ſpoke;
Are we deſpis'd? is all our Thunder vain?
And is it nothing in the Skies to reign?
Nothing to be a God?———
I with my Pow'r command the World below,
I teach the Waves to rore, and Winds to blow.

Me

Me, when I Thunder, all the Globe ſhall hear,
And Man's rebellious Off-ſpring learn to fear;
O'er Birds, o'er Beaſts he rules, o'er all the fry
Of Fiſhes Sailing through the Liquid Sky.
Him the large Monſters of the Deep obey,
But He more Monſt'rous, more unkind than they:
I gave him Freedom, and a Soul Divine,
In ev'ry Limb a ſtroak of Heav'n does ſhine;
Theſe Publick Gifts I equally did ſhare,
Wide as the World, nor was I partial there;
I *Abr'ham*'s Seed diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt,
Abr'ham! the care and darling of my Breaſt.
I, pitying, ſet his Murm'ring Children free
From *Egypt*, and ignoble Slavery.
I *Pharaoh*, (for ye all remember) ſlew,
Him my ſtrong Arm did through the Floods purſue;
The gazing Waters wonder'd as he rode,
Whilſt *Iſr'el* ſafely the ſure bottom trod:
Th' unjointed Sea forgot his wonted force,
And looſ'ned Nature did withdraw her Courſe;
You know how oft I've left th' Ætherial Tow'r,
(So much my Love prevail'd upon my Pow'r)
Divided *Jordan*'s ſilver Streams can ſhow,
I ſpoke, divided *Jordan* ceas'd to flow:
Witneſs the Ruler of the Day, the Sun,
Who ſtop'd his Race; witneſs the Seed of *Nun*,
Ordain'd by us for thouſand Years before,
To lengthen *Iſr'el*, and enlarge it's ſhore;
Witneſs thoſe Kings thruſt from their native Ground,
And Cities conquer'd with a Trumpet's ſound.
Ev'n *David*, that ungracious King, can ſhew,
To whom I gave all that a God could do;
All that a greedy Monarch can require,
All that Ambition or his Luſt deſire;

Him

Him from his Father's woolly Charge I took,
And gave him a bright Scepter for a Crook.
You all beheld, on *Helah*'s bloody Plain,
By his young Hands the monſt'rous *Gathite* ſlain.
'Twas he did the Hate of envious *Saul* repell,
And all the Malice of purſuing Hell.
By me his Pow'r does far and wide extend,
A boundleſs Empire, and without an end.
But now our Laws are ſcorn'd, unmindful He
Of Juſtice, Goodneſs, of himſelf and Me.
In'ocent *Urias* by his crime did fall,
Whoſe bleeding Ghoſt does ſtill for Venge'nce call.
A thouſand plagues the ſtubborn King ſhall bear,
And all *Jerus'lem* in my Judgments ſhare.
Renown'd examples to the future age,
And laſting Mon'ments of eternal rage.

He ſaid, The Spirits ſtood ſilent as he ſpake,
Whilſt the whole Firmament around did ſhake.
Heav'n's immeaſur'd ſpace made loud reply,
Like Thunder ecch'oing from the diſtant Sky.
The mighty *Shilo* felt his Father's care,
(For Son and Father of like paſſions are.)
Their heav'nly minds in equal order run,
And what does move the Father, moves the Son.
The Son was Mercy, Love he only knew,
Wrath from his breaſt, as from an En'my, flew.
The melting God with pit'ing look ſurveys,
The world below, and man's unhaypy Race.
He roſe, and nodding his illuſtrious head,
Theſe words to his Almighty Father ſaid:

Immortal Parent of the world and Me,
Author of all that is, or is to be;

Hear

Hear me implore: Thee let no Paſſions move,
Nor heavy Juſtice ſo out-weigh thy love.
Let no ungodlike Rage begin to riſe,
Unworthy the Commander of the Skies.
If we ſhould ſhoot as oft as Man ſhall ſin,
How ſoon (alas!) our Quivers would be thin!
Soon would our Lightning and our Shafts be ſpent,
No Thunder rowling in the Firmament.
Unbottom'd Hell, tho' large and unconfin'd,
Would ſcarce contain a part of Humankind.
Myriads and Myriads would unburied go,
And crouded Ghoſts lament for room below.
Diminiſh'd Nature would begin to dye,
And Earth, unpeopled like a Deſart lye.

Are then thy Prophets falſe? thy Promiſe vain?
Didſt thou for this the Race of man ordain?
Have we not fix'd a ſtated time, when All
Shall in one univerſal Ruin fall?
When the diſorder'd Elements ſhall burn,
Wither in Flames, and to their Nothing turn.
Till then, Great Father, let thy Thunder ſleep,
Till then the Terrour of thy Lightning keep

He ended here. Cherubs and Seraphs ſung,
Whilſt with applauſe the ſtarry Palace rung.
They tun'd their golden Harps: Heav'n's Monarch ſmil'd,
And ſtreight became more merciful and mild.
His Rage departs: He feels his thoughtful Mind
Melt into Softneſs, and to Love inclin'd.
Then calls forth *Gabri'l*, Miniſter of Heav'n,
And Gen'ral of the fair ſelected Sev'n,
Who walk the Circuit of the World, to know
(Laborious Angels!) what we do below:

No Sign of Anger now his looks betray'd,
But, ſmilingly, theſe pleaſing words he ſaid.
I'll try once More my ſtretching Grace, and know
How far the Mercy of a God will go.
Thrice among Monſters *Jeſſe*'s Offpring fell,
Thrice we the ſalvage Monſters did repell:
Himſelf a Monſter now! but we forgive,
His bloody Crimes, and ſuffer him to live.
Haſt then to *Naioth*'s Town, our Prophets ſeat,
Who there enjoy Eaſe, and a learn'd retreat,
Bid *Nathan* go to *David*, and relate
Berſaba's wrongs, and juſt *Uriah*'s fate,
Whoſe injur'd Ghoſt does ſtill for Blood complain,
Unleſs his Sorrow waſhes out the ſtain.

Scarce had he ſpoke, when *Gabr'iel* left the Sky;
From Heav'ns high Top did the Wing'd Envoy fly.
An azure Mantle does around him play,
And ſoftned Clouds fring'd with the Sun's pure Ray
Serve him for wings; whoſe flying Sails do bear,
The nimble Angel through the liquid Air.
O'er *Ramah*'s Hills he takes his Winding Flight,
And does at laſt, unſeen, in *Naioth* light.

Here the good Prophet eas'd his careful breaſt,
And weary Nature borrow'd gentle Reſt.
When *Gabr'iel Sam'el*'s rev'rend likeneſs took,
And in theſe words his ſacred Meſſage ſpoke;
Nathan, well-read in ſure Futurity,
Awake and hear what Heav'n commands by me.
With ſpeed to *Judah*'s Monarch haſt, relate
Berſaba's wrongs, and juſt *Uriah*'s Fate.
Whoſe injur'd Ghoſt does ſtill for blood complain,
Unleſs his Sorrow waſhes out the ſtain.

The Prophet, waken'd with the Voice he heard,
Aroſe, but ſtreight the Viſion diſappear'd,
Inſpir'd by God and by wiſe *Sam'el* ſent,
Undoubtingly to *Judah*'s Court he went.

On David's lofty Palace top there ſtood
A pleaſant Garden and delightful Wood.
Here nodding Trees their fruitful Branches ſhook
And bending Boughs with lovely Apples broke.
Here various Fruits in artful order grew,
That *Babylonian* Lux'ry ever knew.
Here in a Grove retiring *David* walk'd;
Here with the Monarch the rough Prophet talk'd.
I from the Almighty come, who from above,
Beheld thy Murder, and thy hated Love;
From hence thou viewd'ſt the treach'rous charming She
Witneſs this conſc'ious Grove: Witneſs each bluſhing Tree
And then in words he paints his bloody Crimes.
Jeſſides heard, and wept. ——

On Earth he threw the Sceptre which he bore,
And felt a paſſion greater than before.
No more *Berſaba* can his mind delight,
No more her charming Graces can invite.
A Kingly Grief his mournful Breaſt reclaims,
And ſtreaming Tears quench the forbidden flames.

This pious ſorrow *Nathan* did behold,
And ſtreight the Prophet things to come foretold.
No more indulge thy Grief, but hear, ſaid he,
What gracious Heav'n has pre-ordain'd for Thee.

A royal Race ſhall from thy Loyns deſcend,
And flying Conqueſts through the world extend.

Tigris

Tigris ſhall wildly ſwell with hoſtile Gore,
Whilſt *Syrian* Blood ſtains ſwift *Euphrates* ſhore.
Judean Arms through all ſhall cut their way,
Africk and *Egypt* ſhall become their prey.
But of thy num'rous Progeny, ſhall none
Be wiſer, or more fair than *Solomon*.
Heav'n ſhall to him unbounded Knowledge give,
All that a Mortal nature can receive.
Sabæan Kings ſhall leave the parched Line,
And bring, like Vot'ries, Off'rings to his Shrine.
The Southern Queen her Kingdom ſhall forſake,
And learned rules from his example take.
Then bount'ous Heav'n ſhall all it's riches throw,
That fruitful Sun's can breed, or Show'rs beſtow.
Then precious *Ophir*'s wealth ſhall bleſs the Land,
And ſilver *Jordan* flow with golden Sand.
Continual Corn ſhall the low Vallies fill,
And verdant Oks ſweet yellow Dew diſtill.
Far from the painted Eaſt ſhall Monarchs ſtray,
And uncompell'd their glorious Tributes pay.
From ev'ry part great Emperours ſhall come,
Some ſhall bring Pearls, *Arabian* Spices ſome.
Sacred to God ſhall a bright Temple riſe;
The wondrous work ſhall make the vaulted Skies.
His boundleſs ſway ſhall ſtretch o're *Babel*'s Tower,
And ſandy *Libya* ſhall obey his power.
Him the vaſt Earth undoubted Lord ſhall ſtyle,
From wide *Euphrates* to the ſecret *Nile*.

A Row of glorious Worthies then ſhall reign,
Defend *Judea*, and her Right maintain.
Tho' wicked Kings ſhall harm thy race and Thee,
Thy Seed ſhall riſe, like Rocks a bove the Sea.

To

root thee out, tho' a whole World combine,
o human Forces can resist Divine.
mmanding *Judah* shall her Sceptre bear,
d rule till Promis'd *Shilo*, shall appear.
he Promis'd *Shilo*, the Mysterious King
ho gave thee Birth, from thy bright Loyns shall spring:
he bending Clouds he shall unseen divide,
nd, without grief, leave his great Father's side.
hilst Angels gaze, whilst all the Spirits above,
nd God himself shall wonder at his Love.
o Heav'nly Sings the Deity proclaims,
o Arms, no Lightning, no avenging Flames.
o good he comes, so humble and so mild,
ot like a Thunderer, but like a Child.
hen *Eden*'s Garden shall again Display
's Beaut'ous Beams, and make Eternal day.
hen happy Man immortal Fruit shall see,
nd, without danger, tast the Second Tree.
e spake. Vast Joy did *David*'s heart invade;
e took his Lyre, and Wondrously he plaid
f wondrous Mercy: No unchast Desire
id the great Poet's Heav'nly Thoughts inspire.
e Sung; nor could *Bersaba* now Beguile,
is Lute or Hearts-Strings; with an Am'rous smile.
o God his Lute resourds, to God alike
is Lute and Heart in equal Numbers strike.

F I N I S,

ERRATA.

N the Preface *p.* 1. l. 9. at the latter end, dele *the*, *p.* 4. l. 11. *d.* (. *p.* ib. l. 20. r. *ἄκραντα* *p.* 6. l. 2. r. *Ghost* *p.* 7. l. 15. r. *or Furies.* In the Verses, *fol.* l. 6. r. *Domestick.*